

Guidelines

Storefront Improvement is a reimbursement grant sponsored by the Gresham Redevelopment Commission. The grant provides financial and technical assistance to commercial property and business owners who wish to restore or update their building facade.

Funded projects will increase the assessed value of the property, increase the perception of safety and neighborhood vibrancy, retain and bring new jobs to the area, and utilize vacant or severely underdeveloped buildings. Eligible improvements made to the exterior of a building must be durable and of high quality, be visible to an arterial street within the designated grant area, and amount to at least \$10,000 in value.

Storefront Improvement is a grant match that funds 50% of total eligible project costs. The minimum grant amount allowed is \$5,000 and the maximum grant amount allowed is \$20,000.

Participants

Both commercial property owners and business lessees with written authorization of the property owner may apply for grant funding. The business must be located within the Storefront Improvement grant boundaries to participate (see Eligible Streets map).

Businesses not eligible for Storefront Improvement grant funding include:

- National franchises/for profit corporations with multiple locations outside of the metro region
- Buildings in excess of 80,000 square feet
- Government offices and agencies (non-governmental tenants are eligible) or other non-taxed entities
- Businesses that exclude minors
- Properties primarily in residential use.

Eligible Improvements

Rehabilitation to the exterior of a building that is visible to the street is considered eligible. Improvements must add vibrancy to the neighborhood and be constructed for durability and quality.

Eligible improvements include, but are not limited to:

- Exterior painting
- Siding replacement
- Windows and door replacement
- New cornices, gutters and downspouts
- Signs and graphics
- Exterior lighting

- Canopies and awnings
- Limited security and accessibility improvements
- Landscaping, fencing, seal coating and restriping of parking lots, bike racks, and interior window display lighting are allowed as long as they are part of the work that directly affects the building exterior.

In general, the grant will reimburse for the following expenses:

- Materials used in eligible improvements
- Labor costs except those performed by applicant
- City of Gresham permit and design review fees

Ineligible Work

The following work is considered ineligible:

- Roofs
- Structural foundations
- Sidewalks and stand-alone ADA related improvements
- Billboards
- Security systems
- Non-permanent fixtures
- Interior window coverings
- Vinyl awnings
- Personal property and equipment
- Security bars
- Razor/barbed wire fencing
- Paving
- Advertising, interior modifications, and other projects that do not directly relate to the visual improvement or rehabilitation of the business

Architectural Assistance

The Gresham Redevelopment Commission has qualified architects on retainer to provide up to 30-hours of free design assistance. The architect can assist with project design as well as project review and approval through the City of Gresham should it be necessary.

Architectural services not contracted through the Gresham Redevelopment Commission may be reimbursed up to \$1,500. This amount will be paid in addition to the grant funds awarded as a reimbursable project expense. Reimbursement for outside design assistance will only take place if the improvements occur under the Storefront Improvement grant.

Incentive for Hiring Women-owned, Minority-owned and Small Businesses

Property owners who hire a State-certified Women-or-Minority Business Enterprise or an Emerging Small Business to perform approved work will be eligible for a match grant of 60% of the costs.

The Oregon State OMWESB website offers a directory of certified firms at:
<http://egov.oregon.gov/DCBS/OMWESB/firms.shtml>

Approval Process

1. **Application:** Applications may be submitted at any time. Funds are limited. Grants are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.
2. **Pre-Approval Letter:** Accepted applicants receive a Pre-Approval Letter. This letter will note all requirements that must be met prior to grant funds being committed to the project.
3. **Approvals:** The Gresham Redevelopment Commission approves all applications and has the sole authority to determine eligibility of proposed work. Certain work may be required or precluded as a condition of funding. Participants will be responsible for obtaining necessary regulatory approvals, including City of Gresham building permits and any other necessary permits. All work must comply with city, state, and federal regulations.
4. **Competitive Bidding:** Three competitive bids for each type of work to be done are needed. The Gresham Redevelopment Commission will pay 50% of the lowest bid for all eligible projects, or a minimum of \$5,000 and maximum of \$20,000. All work must be completed by contractors licensed with the State of Oregon. All construction contracts will be between the applicant and the contractor. (If the applicant plans to hire a Women-owned, Minority-owned or Emerging Small Business, it must be established prior to commitment of funds.)
5. **Commitment of Funds:** A Letter of Commitment will be issued once all pre-approval conditions are met and the project is approved by the Gresham Redevelopment Commission. The Letter of Commitment will note the terms and conditions of the matching grant and serves as the legal agreement regarding the scope and quality of work and the amount of funds committed. The grant amount may be reduced if, upon completion of the project, actual improvements conflict with previously approved grant-related items.
6. **Reimbursement of Funds:** The grant is paid upon completion of all pre-approved, applicant-paid, work. Under no circumstances will grant funds be disbursed for work completed before:
 - A Letter of Commitment has been provided.
 - All completed pre-approved work has been reviewed by Gresham Redevelopment Commission for compliance with the Letter of Commitment.
 - Proof of payment for all completed pre-approved work has been received.
 - Additionally, when federal Community Development Block Grant funds are used on the same project as Storefront Improvement grant funds, all necessary paperwork associated with the federal wage rates must be completed and approved by the City of Gresham.

General Conditions

The following conditions will apply to all projects:

- Improvements funded by the grant will be maintained in good order for a period of at least five years. Graffiti and vandalism will be dutifully repaired during this period.
- Applicants must be current on all taxes, fees or penalties owed to the City of Gresham before funds will be committed; in addition, no commitment of funds will be made to an applicant with delinquent Code Violations in Gresham.
- Upon completion of improvements, the Applicant shall provide a Certificate of Property Insurance evidencing property coverage for improvements in an amount not less than the value of the improvements.

- Eligible buildings qualify for a maximum of \$20,000. The same building is eligible to participate in Storefront Improvement more than once as long as the building does not exceed the maximum grant. The maximum grant will be available again after a five-year period. If a building is sold and the new owner wishes to apply for the grant, the five-year time period still applies. The five-year time period begins at the date the improvements are completed.
- All projects will display signage indicating the Gresham Redevelopment Commission's involvement in the improvements. The sign will be supplied by the Gresham Redevelopment Commission.
- The Gresham Redevelopment Commission reserves the right to consider exceptions to the grant policies and guidelines on a case-by-case basis at its sole discretion.

The Executive Director for the Gresham Redevelopment Commission or designee may make minor exceptions to the grant guidelines.

For more information, please contact Michael Parkhurst, Project Coordinator, by phone at (503) 618-2416 or by email at michael.parkhurst@greshamoregon.gov. Guidelines and application forms are available on our website: www.greshamoregon.gov/UrbanRenewal under "Grant Programs."

